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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 07 THE HAGUE 002309

SIPDIS

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TAGS PREL, PGOV, PTER, ECON, EAID, NL, EUN, USUN

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S PARTING THOUGHTS ON TAKING THE DUTCH
TO THE NEXT LEVEL

Classified By: AMBASSADOR CLIFFORD SOBEL FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

11. (S) SUMMARY: With the EU divided and its direction uncertain, the Dutch serve as a vital transatlantic anchor in Europe. As one of the orig

12. (S) (SUMMARY CONTINUED) The Dutch are expanding their leadership beyond Europe. Dutch strategic interests in the Caribbean make them logica

13. (S) (SUMMARY CONTINUED) The coalition government, headed by PM Balkenende, is naturally inclined to work closely with the U.S. The balance

LEADERS IN EUROPE

14. (S) Along with the British, the Dutch form a strong, reliable transatlantic anchor in Europe. As a founding member of NATO, one of the orig

15. (S) With the French-German engine of European integration stalled, German elections pending, and the EU unable to agree on finances, leader

16. (S) Dutch leadership within the EU does not weaken their commitment to NATO, where they are "go-to guys" for resolving potential EU-NATO cc

POLITICAL-MILITARY COOPERATION BEYOND THE EU

17. (S) The Dutch are increasingly aware that strategic interests outside Europe warrant their attention and leadership, especially in the poli
- Venezuela: The Dutch have strategic interests in the Caribbean (i.e., the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba) and are deeply concerned about Chav
- Afghanistan: According to CENTCOM, the Dutch took a strong lead in organizing and soliciting forces to staff ISAF Phase III, and are now prep
- Africa: Senior Dutch military officials say they are considering expanding their military presence in Africa to include Burundi, Rwanda, East
- Middle East: The Dutch enjoy a reputation for "balance" almost unique in Europe, as they are strong supporters of Israel, yet trusted by Arab

18. (S) These commitments demonstrate how the Dutch "take their responsibilities seriously" in practice by committing real resources -- money,

19. (S) The Dutch have one of the largest, most geographically diverse deployments of military forces in the world, with more troops deployed a

COUNTERTERRORISM COOPERATION

110. (S) Faced with growing threats in their own country, as witnessed by the murder of Theo van Gogh in November 2004, the Dutch believe they

DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

111. (S) The Netherlands is among the world's leading aid donors, having budgeted USD 4.2 billion (0.74 percent of GDP, with a target of raisir

CENTER OF INTERNATIONAL LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS

112. (S) With the International Court of Justice (ICJ), International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), the Permanent Court c

ECONOMICS AND TRADE

113. (S) Balkenende shares our interest in promoting an open international trading system and has been an ally in U.S.-EU trade disputes such a

DRUGS AND TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

114. (S) Narcotics and trafficking in persons remain areas of difficulty. Despite fundamental differences regarding "soft drugs" and legalized

BALKENENDE SOLID INTERNATIONALLY...

115. (S) We are fortunate to have in the Balkenende government an outward-looking partner for whom working with the U.S. and the U.K. comes nat

116. (S) Specific U.S. policies provoke squalls of anger and frustration here, but President Bush's visit to the Netherlands in 2005 to commemc

...BUT FACES DOMESTIC CHALLENGES

117. (S) Unfortunately, the outward-looking, transatlantic orientation of the Balkenende cabinet is offset domestically by strong strains of Eu

118. (S) Although U.S.-Dutch relations should remain fundamentally sound despite a shift to the center-left, a PvdA-led government would preser

THE ISLAMIC FACTOR

119. (S) A new, but potentially serious factor in Dutch domestic politics is its large, poorly integrated Muslim population, currently numberir

CONCLUSIONS

120. (S) The Netherlands is a complicated, multi-layered society. Prevailing myths about the Dutch -- e.g., they are homogenous, universally tc

121. (S) The key to maximizing Dutch effectiveness is to involve them early through high-level consultations and exchanges. Dutch pragmatism ar

122. (S) As multipliers, the Dutch should be encouraged to play an increasingly prominent role on the global stage. Coaxing the Dutch into the

123. (S) The Dutch are actively and favorably involved in Afghanistan, Africa, Iraq, the Middle East, the Balkans, the Caribbean, Indonesia, ar
SOBEL